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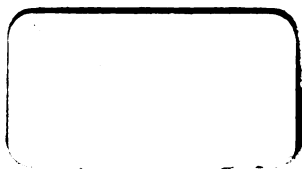


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VOL. V

Imprecation as a Means of Emphasis in Old French *Chansons de Geste*

BY

OLIVER TOWLES

An Example of Secondary Ablaut in the English Weak Verb

BY

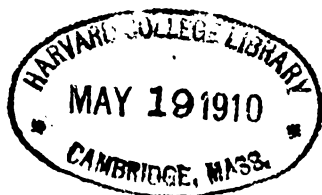
JAMES FINCH ROYSTER

Hebbel's *Julia* a Forerunner of the Modern Drama

BY

PALMER COBB

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IMPRECATION AS A MEANS OF EMPHASIS IN THE OLD FRENCH *CHANSONS DE GESTE*

BY

OLIVER TOWLES

The specific bibliography on the subject of Imprecation from a linguistic point of view is limited. The only treatment of the question, serious or incidental, known to me is an article entitled *Von Verwunschen*, by Professor Tobler of Berlin, published first in the "Mommсен Festschrift," and later in the Fourth Series of Tobler's "Vermischte Beiträge."

In review of Tobler's article, be it said that it consists of a collection of the various types of simple and emphasizing Imprecations in Old French with their significations, and that the author foregoes any attempt to classify and analyze and explain the different forms. This task of classifying the forms I have attempted myself, and I think that the mere classification, by illustrating the gradual process of development from the most simple to the most complex forms, furnishes satisfactory explanation of the construction wherever such explanation seems necessary.

The Imprecation in this function of an emphasis-bestower forms one of three divisions of a heading which we entitle: *Expressions serving to emphasize past, present and future statements by the invocation of some revered power or beloved object*. Such an invocation may be:

I. ADJURATIVE; in which case a wish stands in attestation, or emphasis of the speaker's words, as: *Si m' ait Dieu*.

II. INTERJECTIONAL; where the name of the power or object invoked is governed by a preposition, the whole expressive of a violent emotion, such as would naturally accompany great decision of mind or state of assurance, as: *Par mon chief*.

III. IMPRECATIVE; where, at least in its original form, the speaker calls down a curse upon himself in case he speak not the truth, as: *Maudis soie, se ce n'est vrai*=*May I be cursed, if this be not so*.

The basis of the emphasizing Imprecation is naturally the simple direct Imprecation of one's enemy. The Old French authors display great inventiveness in the manufacture of this kind of invective. Some of the most common forms are:

Rol. 1958: *Mal aies tu.* — *Li Nerbonnais*, 5140: *A cent deables soit son cors comandé.* — *Aiol*, 2897: *Mal ait ses ciés.* — *Coven. Viv.* 937: *Mal des gloutons qui les ont engendrez.* — *Cour. Louys*, 200: *Mal dahé ait parmi la croiz del chief.* — etc.

The emphasizing Imprecations formed from these simple Imprecations are of two types, depending upon whether the object of Imprecation be a known, specified person, as in the fundamental form: *Maudis soie, se* etc., or an unknown, unspecified person: *Mal ait cil, qui*, etc.

In the first case the specified object of the Imprecation becomes the subject of a conditional or temporal statement appended to the Imprecation, and the whole is equivalent to an emphatic denial of this statement in the name of the speaker. So: *Aiol*, 1920: *Dameldex me confonge, se ja en ferai garde* (= *I will not take care*). — *Alisc.* 6726, a: *S'or ne me venge, ja n'aie je salu* (= *I will avenge myself*). In the second case the unspecified object of the Imprecation becomes the subject of an annexed relative clause, the statement of which is denied likewise in the name of the speaker. So: *Rol.* 1040: *Dient Franceis: Dehet ait ki s'enfuit. Ja pur murir ne vus en faldrat uns* (= *We will not flee*). — *Aiol*, 157: *Mal dehait qui laira por povreté Que jor ne voise en France al roi parler* (= *I will most certainly go to France, etc.*).

For the present we will examine the former type, in which, as I said, a definite, known person is the object of the Imprecation. We find examples of the construction for the 1 pers. in future, present and past time, and for the 3 pers. in past time.

The construction is most logical in the 1 pers. for future time, and it is evidently from this point that the development began. The speaker calls down a curse upon himself in case he commit or do not commit a certain act. It is not believable that any man would curse himself conditionally, if he had the slightest suspicion that this condition would ever come true. Consequently, to the mind of the hearer the whole utterance is equivalent to the expres-

sion of a fixed intention on the part of the speaker. The act intended lies in the future, but the statement of the intention is in the present. It results, then, that even when the act is in the future, it is the present veracity of the speaker as regards his intention that is emphasized, just as well as when the act is in the present or in the past, such as: *Mal aie je se jeo ce fais*, or *ce ai fait*. Examples of the construction are: *Alisc.* 6726, a: *S'or ne me venge, ja n'aie je salu* (= *I will avenge myself*). — *Rol.* 3757: *Fels seie, se jo l'ceil*. — *Aiol*, 9120: *Dameldex me confonge, se ja en ferai garde*.

The following are grammatically in the 3 pers., but logically in the 1. *Anseis de Carthage*, 7619: *Et se nous somes de paiens, proursivis, Dahait Joieuse (his sword) se souvent n'i guencis*. — *Doon de Maience*, 6252: *Doon refusing an offer: Que honni soit or Do, se merchi vos en rent*.

It being then a question of emphasizing the veracity of the speaker, there is no reason why the subject of the dependent clause should not be different from the object of the Imprecation, whereby we would have: *Mal aie je se il l'a fait*. Although I have no examples of this form from Old French, the parallel in English and the reasonableness of the extension give us a right to suppose its existence. At this point the English parallel ceases, while the French goes on one step further. In the type: *Mal aie je, se il l'a fait*, the 1 pers. of the Imprecation seems to be attracted to the 3 pers. of the conditional clause, and we reach the very common form: *Mal ait se il l'a fait*, which would correspond to an English: *May he be cursed if he did this*, in the sense of: *He did not do it*. So: *Aiol*, 7351: *Issus est de la canbre, vers Aiol s'en torna, Mal ait se a conseil un seul en apela. Mais a molt haute vois son seigneur escrii*.

The second type of emphasizing Imprecations, though quite different from the first in form, is identical with it in signification, — at least at the outset. For example, at Roncesvaux, when proposals of peace and surrender are made, the French troops cry out as one man: *Mal ait ki s'enfuit*, = *We will not flee*. The object of the Imprecation is an unspecified person. Still the expression is equivalent to a positive affirmation in the name of the speaker.

In the case of the first form, where the Imprecation is followed by a conditional clause, the asseveration is usually, though by no means necessarily, that of one person; while in the second form, the asseveration is more generally in the name of the 1 pers. plural. This kind of affirming Imprecation is also found in present, past and future time. So: *Rol.* 1047: *Dient Franceis: Dehet ait ki s'enfuit. Ja pur murir ne vos en faldrat uns.* — *Guy de Bourg,* 856: *Dahais ait qui an chaut.* — *Couron. Louys,* 1855: *Dahé ait qui vos crient.* — *Li Nerbonnais,* 606: A Saracen asks a body of troops for whom certain provisions are being brought. Their leader replies: *Vos n'i avez neant. Mal dahaz ait anz o nes par devant, Qui ainz por vos l'aporta tant ne quant. La vitaille est Aymeri le ferrant.* This is an emphatic manner of saying: *We never brought it for you.*

The interesting feature of these expressions is the fact that while they are formally identical with the literal imprecating of a curse upon some one who may have actually committed a certain act, (Compare: *Li Nerbonnais,* 4123: *En la fenetre un pertuis avissa. Maleoit soit icel qui le perca.* — *Aliscans,* 3780: *Rainouart is obliging four knaves to carry his weapon: Entre leur denz prirent a rune-ter: Maleois soit ki cest fust doit porter.*), in their actual meaning they are totally opposed to such non-asseverative Imprecations. These asseverative Imprecations are, to put it mildly, unfavorable assertions in regard to some third person, while the true asseverative Imprecation is always a favorable statement in regard to a person or persons of the third person, unknown and unspecified. Furthermore it would seem that the only manner of distinguishing whether the asseverative or literal, imprecating value exists in any example, such as: *Mal ait qui l'a fait,* (apart from the context), depends entirely upon the manner of enunciation, — in other words, upon the relative degree of stress given the pronoun. I think we have every reason to suppose that wherever the relative pronoun, representing a hypothetical person, be strongly stressed in pronunciation, or, in the written language, by the presence of a demonstrative antecedent, *cil, cist,* etc., in that case the utterance is no longer asseverative, giving a favorable statement in regard to the 1 pers., but tends to be literally imprecating and unfavorable to some third person or persons, unspecified.

This fact seems to be of the greatest importance in connection with the more complex form of the second type of asseveration, i.e. *Mal ait cil qui l'ait (l'a) fait*, with the signification: *Not a one of them did it*, where, though the construction is still asseverative, the asseveration is not in the 1 pers. but in the 3. So: *Aiol*, 4536: *Dont se teurent Normant et Hurepois Et Flamenc Et li Francois; Mal ait cil qui s'osast lever des dois, Tant doubterent Mibrien cel riche roi.* — *Charroi de Nymes*, 1412: *Mar soit de cel qui en eschapist vivant,* — *Li Nerbonnais*, 4550: *Voit son barnage envers terre encline, Mal soit de cel qui ait un mot soné.* — *Aliscans*, 7695: *Mal soit de cel qui l'osast aprochier.* — *Aiol*, 9871: *Mal soit de l'un des .iiii. qui en püst vis aler Qu'a lor coutiaus ne soit trestout esboielés.*

Allow me to contrast these two type constructions:

(1) *Mal ait qui l'a fait* = *We did not do it.*

(2) *Mal ait cil qui l'ait fait* = *They did not do it.*

The only formal difference between these two, between which there exists such a wide difference of meaning, is the presence of the demonstrative antecedent *cil* in the second example and the use of the subjunctive. The differences of signification are diametrical. First the circumstances under which these expressions would be used are not the same. The first is a favorable affirmation made by the speaker of himself and his friends; the relative pronoun is not stressed. The second is always, as the examples show us, a more or less unfavorable assertion in regard to a group of persons, unidentified with the speaker; the pronoun is emphasized by the presence of the demonstrative antecedent. The presence of this demonstrative antecedent, by emphasizing the identity of the hypothetical person, is apparently sufficient to change the construction from a favorable assertion of the 1 pers.; that is, that while still asseverative the literal Imprecation is given more prominence. In construction (1), to judge from my examples, the subjunctive does not occur; in construction (2), practically always. In the type: *Mal ait qui l'a fait*, it is not denied that some one may have committed the act; the speaker merely says: *May he be cursed who did it; I did not.* In: *Mal ait qui l'ait fait*, however, the very existence of the one of such a kind as to commit the act is denied. We have the subjunctive here apparently

for the same reasons for which we have it in the following examples:

Aliscans, 2898: *Asses parole, ne trueve kil desdie.* — *ib.*, 3114: *N'i ot si cointe ki l'osast refuser.* — *Marie Fraïse*, 247: *Nus ne la vit ki ne l'amast.* For construction (2) I have two examples of the use of the indicative:

Gaufrey, 2139: *Et je que vous diroie? Il les a tous tués; Que mal soit de cheli qui en est escapés.* — *Charroi de Nymes*, 146: *Grant fu la boce qui fu au renver, Mal soit del mire qvi li me dut saner.*

AN EXAMPLE OF SECONDARY ABLAUT IN THE ENGLISH WEAK VERB

BY

JAMES FINCH ROYSTER

Ablaut relations other than those founded in the Indo-European system have received particular attention from Goettisch (*Modern Philology*, V. 569ff. and VI. 229ff.) and from Bloomfield (*Modern Philology*, VIII. 245ff. and 345ff.). Part Two of Goettisch's study furnishes a long list of weak verbs in Gothic, Old High German and Middle High German which, though not related to strong verbs, show ablaut relations "that arose probably through 'ablaut feeling' by analogy." Bloomfield's article has to do with semasiological differences in analogical ablaut formations in certain noun series in all the Germanic dialects. He contends that "the relation in such sets of words [*flip: flap: flop*] is as much an ablaut as that in English *lie: lay; sing: sang: sung*. In the above cases [*flip: etc.*] the ablaut is 'secondary,' or later, that is all — and it may be that a study of the cases nearer to us, where origins are often more apparent, may give us some help in penetrating into the mystery of the 'original' or Indo-European ablaut." These two studies point to a widening of the signification of "ablaut" to connote a definitely established relation between certain vowel sounds without reference to the date at which this relation was secured or to the conditions under which it was fixed.

In connection with the extension of the use of "ablaut", I wish here to point out an example of late or secondary ablaut in a group of English weak verbs, which usually are catalogued as "irregular weak verbs", — "irregular" on account of the fact that there is a difference between the vowel of the infinitive and the vowel of the preterite, despite the presence of the dental preterite ending. The following weak verbs in Modern English exhibit between pres. and

pret. the vowel succession *i* (written *ee*, *ea*): *e*, and at the same time employ a dental suffix.¹

breed, bred	keep, kept
bleed, bled	leap, leapt (leaped)
bereave, bereft (bereaved)	lead, led
creep, crept	leave, left
cleave, cleft	meet, met
deal, dealt	mean, meant
dream, dreamt (dreamed)	plead, plead (pleaded)
eat, eat (ate, eat)	read, read
feed, fed	sleep, slept
feel, felt	speed, sped
flee, fled	sweep, swept
kneel, knelt	weep, wept

The origin of the vowel change in the verbs of this list is entirely clear and comparatively recent. In O. E. not a small number of consistently weak verbs with long radical vowels syncopated the middle vowel of the pret.² In this tense two consonants were, consequently, thrown together, and as early as late O. E. a vowel before two consonants was generally shortened, as O. E. *lædan*, *lædde*; M. E. *lêden*, *ledde*; Mod. E. *lead*, *led*. Shortening of the vowel before two consonants easily explains the origin of the vowel succession that we still retain. This explanation of the origin does not negative the contention, however, that *lêden*, *ledde*; *lead*, *led* bear the same relation to each other that **φωρός*, *φώρ* do, or *lego*, *-léxi*, — that is, quantitative ablaut.

This new ablaut relation arose, then, through the working of a well established phonological law. Originating in this manner in a group of weak verbs, this vowel succession became an ablaut pattern — satisfied the “ablaut feeling” — for the formation of new prets. for verbs originally not members of this group. This statement is substantiated by the history of those strong verbs whose infinitive vowel in M. E. was *é* (<O. E. *éo*, *æ*, *é*) that went over from the strong to the weak conjugation in the M. E.

1 This list includes those verbs that have two forms in use today, as *dreamed*, *dreamt*. Both forms are given.

2 Sievers, *Grammatik*. 404.

period. O.E. *hléopan*, *hléap*; *fléon*, *fléah*;³ *créopan*, *créap*; *slæpan*, *slép*; *wépan*, *wéop*; *swápan*, *swéap*, — all had strong pret. in constant use until the fifteenth century. Weak pret. forms for these verbs began to appear, however, in common use in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Following the ablaut pattern established by the *lédén*, *ledde*-type, these new pret. became *fledde(e)*, *crept(e)*, etc. rather than *flédded*, *créped*, etc. according to the more general model for weak verb pret.

The time of the greatest influence of this ablaut pattern was from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. By the fifteenth century the more powerful model, unchanged vowel + dental suffix, had established itself thoroughly and was forever ordained as the pattern for all future new weak verb pret. Late M.E. *héven* < early M.E. *heven* (Layamon), which would naturally fall into the *crépen*, *slépan*-group, retained a usual strong pret. until after the time when the model that would have given us **heft* had been entirely overcome by the stronger pattern. But the contest was not without a struggle. Spenser, undoubtedly indulging in his pastime of archaizing, wrote:

Inflamed with wrath, his raging blade he hefte.

F. Q. I.X.39.

And with such furie back at him it heft.

F. Q. IV.XI.12

Heft was further used in the sixteenth century. (N.E.D.)

The now regular model for the formation of weak verb pret. was, in fact, so powerful even at the time when there was "ablaut feeling" for *é : e* that many of the verbs of the *é : e*-type also formed their pret. according to its requirements. *Leved*, *leaded* occur in the thirteenth century; *creeped*, *cleaved* in the fourteenth. I have not calculated the proportion between *leaded* and *ledde*, etc. in the thirteenth, fourteenth or fifteenth centuries; but the shortened form is undoubtedly much the more frequently used. Chaucer uses generally the syncopated forms: *felte*, *fedde*, *kepte*,

3 Sweet's suggestion of confusion with *fledan*, to account for the weak pret. is scarcely probable on account of the dissimilarity in meaning. The N.E.D. suggests Skandinavian influence. Why not the more simple explanation of the influence of the pattern?

mette, lente, mente, etc.⁴ Yet Chaucer uses double forms in the pret. for *lédén* and *léven*, and he writes for the most part *drémed*.⁵

The use of two forms, as *crepte* : *creped*, merely indicates that the ablaut feeling for *é* : *e* was not sufficiently strong to be carried entirely through. The double forms here raise this interesting question: was the relation between *e* : *o* at the very beginning of ablaut as stable as we generally assume it to have been? Is it possible that there were individualistic users of language who would not put on the yoke of conformity and who would not accept **gen* : **gnó* as an absolutely fast relation and who insisted on levelling to one form, as for instance, *λόγος*, **λόγειν* instead of *λόγος*, *λέγειν*. It is probable that had the group of *é* : *e* verbs been larger a new ablaut process would have been securely established and that we should now say *gleam*, **gleamt*, instead of *gleam*, *gleamed*. The weight of numbers was, however, in the opposite direction.

However this may have been, the fact is certain that by the beginning of the Mod. E. period "ablaut feeling" for *é* : *e* in the verb had been entirely suppressed by the crushing majority of the *é* : *é*+*d*, *t*-type. The case of *heave* has been cited above. If *steal* and *speak* had become at any time from the fifteenth century to the present time weak verbs the new prets. would have been **speaked* and **stealed*, not **spekt* and **stelt*. Verbs introduced after the fifteenth century,—*seam* (16 century), *deplete* (19 century), *stampeed*, *deed* (American),—follow the usual model and not the ablaut pattern. The tendency to conformity with the usual model was, in fact, so strong in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that practically all the verbs of the *é* : *e*-type were made by some writers to follow that pattern: *bleeded* (16 century), *dealed* (16 century), *leaped* (16 century on), *leaved* (15 century), *meted* (17

4 ten Brink, *Chaucer's Sprache und Verskunst*. 164.

5 Chaucer's *Prologue*, ed. Liddell. 171. Cf. Manly, *Language of the Legend of Good Women*. 99. The greater number of the verbs noted above as going over to the weak conjugation are still generally strong in Chaucer; but weak forms are not uncommon: *flen*, *flaugh*, also *fledden*; *crepe*, *crep*, also *crepte*; *cleve*, usually *clefte*; *slepe*, *slep*, also *slept*; *wepe*, *wep*, also *wepte*.

century), etc.⁶ Even in our days of conformity, it has not been decided between: *cleaved* : *cleft*; *bereaved* : *bereft*; *dreamed* : *dreamt*; *leaped* : *leapt*. In the case of *plead* : *pleaded* the pret. according to the usual model is, they assure us, the only recognized form.

Vowel shortening in the pret. and past part. in a small group of weak verbs in M. E. produced a difference between the vowel of the infin. and the vowel of the pret., — that is, established an ablaut relation between infin. and pret. Serving as a formation model, this established ablaut spread to a few verbs not originally belonging to this group. The spread of this ablaut was hindered by the scarcity of verbs to which it was capable of application and still more by the overpowering opposition that the ablaut tendency met from the “regular” method of forming the pret. of the weak verb. The spread of the original ablaut was not retarded by similar conditions.

⁶ *Kneel*, *knelt* is exceptional. The pret. and past part. *knelt* are nineteenth century forms; they are probably dialectic forms caught up and given the sanction of good usage accidentally, or through a survival of “ablaut feeling” based on analogy. Cf. the dialectic *beat*, *bet*; American *freeze*, *frez* (also 14 century), along with *friz*.

HEBBEL'S *JULIA* A FORERUNNER OF THE MODERN DRAMA

BY

PALMER COBB

Critics of the naturalistic drama in Germany are practically united in deducing its principal innovations of technique from the structural laws of the short story. To say that Hauptmann, Sudermann and their imitators applied the methods of the novelle to the drama and evolved a new dramatic type has become almost a commonplace of criticism. Hauptmann dedicated his first drama to "Bjarne P. Holmsen, dem consequentesten Realisten, Verfasser von *Papa Hamlet*, in freudiger Anerkennung der durch sein Buch empfangenen entscheidenden Anregung." Arno Holz and Johannes Schlaf had collaborated under this pseudonym in 1887 and 1888 in the cycle of short stories which they called *Papa Hamlet*. They were the first German expounders of French and Scandinavian impressionism. Connecting with this dedication, in which Hauptmann acknowledges his indebtedness to the authors of these short stories, Sigmund Bytkowski¹ traces in detail the revolutionary elements of technique in Hauptmann's dramas and grounds them in universally recognized tenets of epic structure falsely applied by the naturalists to the drama. The modern drama, for example, introduced the custom of attaching to the dialogue in the guise of stage directions pages of descriptive matter dealing with the setting and the characters of the play. This is perhaps the most superficially evident narrative element of the naturalistic drama. R. M. Meyer² says in his *Literaturgeschichte*: "Aber Hauptmann bleibt sogar selber noch im Mischstil befangen. Denn ein Uebergriff des Epos in das Drama sind die höchst ausführlichen szenischen Bemerkungen besonders im zweiten Akt

1 Sigmund Bytkowski, *Gerhart Hauptmanns Naturalismus und das Drama*.

2 R. M. Meyer, *Die deutsche Literatur des 19ten Jahrhunderts*. Berlin, 1909. S. 799 ff.

(*Vor Sonnenaufgang*).'' Otto Heller³ notes that a "mass of epic detail is conveyed through the medium of the stage directions, which thus become an intrinsic part of the play." Beside the descriptive and narrative stage directions there are a number of points in which the modern drama reveals its kinship to the novel. Bytkowski follows Hauptmann through all the phases of his technique, his treatment of the stage directions, exposition, characterization, monologue, dialogue, etc., and shows in each point the intimate relationship of his drama to the novel and the short story.

Mention has been made of Schlaf and Holz as intermediaries of French and Scandinavian models on German soil. In general, naturalism as developed in Germany is usually accredited with a foreign parentage. Zola and Ibsen are made to father the movement in Germany. The seeds of the movement were, however, already existent in German literature. Their fruition was accelerated by foreign influence. Too little light has been thrown on the works of the German forerunners of Hauptmann and Sudermann. A proper valuation of their work must take into account their German predecessors. Ibsen, for example, is said to have expressed his astonishment that his dramas had met with such recognition in Germany where Friedrich Hebbel had preceded him.⁴

It is proposed in the somewhat narrow limits of this investigation to consider one device of technique used by Hebbel in several of his dramas which, up to the time of the naturalists, had been more generally applied to the novel than to the drama. This seems to offer a very evident view-point from which to connect Hebbel with the dramatists of the generation which followed him. Many threads from the fabric of Hebbel's drama have been caught up in the woof of the naturalistic drama. He treats dramatically nearly all the problems which are familiar to the moderns, and he handles with familiarity most of the machinery which is popularly supposed to be of their invention. The scope of the present

3 Otto Heller, *Studies in Modern German Literature*.

4 R. M. Werner, *Friedrich Hebbel als Dramatiker*, "Bühne und Welt," Bd. I. S. 10.

publication permits of the consideration of only a single point. Reference is made to a certain treatment of the exposition, adopted by Hebbel in certain of his dramas, which is distinctly epic in character and which is a very common device of the dramatists of the modern school.

The naturalistic drama of the ripe situation imposes on its author the necessity of a more or less elaborate exposition in order to put the reader or spectator in possession of all the antecedent facts necessary to the proper understanding of the action. The latter is concentrated sharply and forced into conformity to a modified form of the old law of the three unities, in order to create the illusion of a continuous and uninterrupted action. As R. M. Meyer puts it, when the drama opens the characters are already developed and any chance event may produce the explosion. To connect the events of such a drama with the *vorgeschichte* the dramatist had to devise new means of exposition. Since the action was to be as nearly continuous as possible the traditional function of the first act, as the medium of the exposition, could not be adopted. The technique of the novel offered a convenient resource and the exposition was provided for by a skilful unraveling of the antecedent facts throughout the whole play. In many modern plays it is reserved for the last act to bring a final clearing up of the *vorgeschichte*. Berthold Litzmann in his lectures on the modern drama emphasizes this point with respect to Ibsen.⁵ "Schon bei der Nora ward es als eine, jedenfalls die unmittelbare theatralische Wirkung hemmende Eigentümlichkeit empfunden, dass die Keime des tragischen Konfliktes in einer weit zurückliegenden Vorgeschichte stecken, und dass diese erst allmählich während des Fortgangs des Dramas mühsam aus einigen Dialogbrocken herausgelesen werden müssen. Die Gestalten seiner Dramen sind nicht nur im medizinischen Sinne mit einer pathologischen Aszendenz, sondern auch mit einer oft sehr komplizierten Vorgeschichte belastet, und foltern den Hörer und Zuschauer durch geheimnisvolle Winke, Andeutungen, Anspielungen, die eigentlich erst wenn der Vorhang gefallen — oft auch dann nicht — klar werden. Diese

⁵Berthold Litzmann, *Das deutsche Drama*. Hamburg und Leipzig, 1897. S. 152ff.

Technik hat Ibsen seitdem mit dem ihm eigenen Raffinement weiter ausgebildet. Seine Dramen sind eigentlich nur ein fünfter Akt, die Spitze einer Pyramide. Den Unterbau der psychologischen und thatsächlichen Voraussetzungen hat der Dichter in kleine Stücke zerschlagen, die man zum Teil aus den Reden der Handelnden wieder zusammenlesen kann, aber nur mit unsäglicher Mühe."

Another critic of the modern drama makes the same observation with respect to the latter's treatment of the *Vorgeschichte*.⁶ "Man wählt den schwierigeren, aber lebensstreuen Weg, sie im Verlaufe der Handlung allmählich durchsickern zu lassen." Kerr notes further that this is not an invention of the moderns, but rather an adoption. Lessing was a master of the same technique. For purposes of illustration let us look for a moment at Sudermann's *Heimat*. Of all the long story of Magda's past life we learn in the first act only the one fact that she has left the parental roof because she declined to accept the suitor proposed by the family. The second act contributes the additional detail that the news of her decision to become an opera singer brings on an attack of paralysis which accounts for the trembling of the old colonel's hand. The fourteenth scene of the third act discloses the previous relationship between Magda and Keller, the story of her life as a student and the fact that she has a child by Keller. The end of the fifth act brings the confession which motivates the death of her father, namely that Keller has not been the only lover of her past. Thus the *vorgeschichte*, instead of being exposed in the first act, is gradually revealed throughout the whole play and finally cleared up at the very end of the play, a device which evidently imposes the necessity of a certain amount of narrative in the drama.

Of all Hebbel's dramas his *Julia* is perhaps the one which most nearly conforms to the theory of the moderns, both as to technique and subject matter. It is also that work of Hebbel's which is most heavily freighted with narrative technique. R. M. Werner⁷ in his introduction to the drama says: "Der Dialog geht

6 Alfren Kerr, *Das neue Drama*. Berlin, 1907. S. 302.

7 R. M. Werner, *Friedrich Hebbels Smilche. Werke*. Berlin, 1904. Bd. II. S. XXXIII.

immer wieder in Erzählung über, und so vortrefflich sie ausfällt, so sehr uns die moderne Dramatik an das novellistische Element gewöhnt hat, bei Hebbel stellen wir höhere Forderungen, was nicht hindert, dass die 'Julia' bei einer Berliner Aufführung einen tiefen Eindruck gemacht haben soll."

Otto Ludwig⁸ makes the same criticism: "Das Epische überwiegt durch das Ganze das Dramatische. Die Charaktere exponieren sich mehr durch Erzählung als durch Handlung, meist durch charakteristische Anakdoten von ihnen selbst, die sie sogar sich selbst erzählen."

Holding in mind the narrative elements in *Julia* and its other naturalistic factors, let us examine more closely one point of its technique, namely Hebbel's treatment of the exposition. It will be found to be parallel to the characteristic method of the naturalists outlined above. The antecedent facts are briefly as follows:

Tobaldi, the father of the heroine Julia, has been in former years a revolutionist, or at least an advocate of revolutionary reform. Later he appears in the role of a frustrator of revolutionary attempts when he sees that they will be without result. This induces an appearance of treachery to the cause, which arouses the enmity of his former confederate, Grimaldi, who, defying the powers that be, becomes an outlaw and the implacable enemy of his former ally. Grimaldi finally meets death on the scaffold and his son assumes the filial duty of avenging his father on Tobaldi. This son Antonio becomes also an outlaw—one of those robber heroes of romanticism—with a single purpose, that of avenging his father. To that end he goes to the town where Tobaldi lives, seduces the latter's daughter, Julia, and persuades her to flee from her father's home. The play opens after Julia's flight. This, briefly, is the somewhat complicated *vorgeschichte* which Hebbel weaves into his play in much the same way that it would be unraveled in a novel, or after the fashion of Sudermann's treatment of the *vorgeschichte* in *Heimat*, outlined above. A dialogue in the first scene of the third act contributes a discussion of Grimaldi which is more or less vague and leaves the reader with no suspicion of how the narrative is connected with the plot of the drama.

8 Otto Ludwigs *Gesammelte Schriften*. Leipzig, 1891. Bd. 5. S. 358.

Alberto conjures up the past with the single word "Grimaldi," which is wholly mystifying to the reader. Then follows a dialogue which is a one sided defense of Tobaldi's course toward his former friend. At the close of the scene the reader, if he has read closely, knows that Tobaldi has in some way frustrated the plans of Grimaldi, — that the former vainly tried, at the crucial moment, to incite the latter to action, but later, recognizing that it was too late for the fruition of his earlier plans, Tobaldi declined to support the plans of his former ally. The latter saw in that refusal an act of treachery. We gather further that Tobaldi had threatened his friend with disclosure in order to induce the latter to return to his home and that Grimaldi had been finally betrayed by a member of his own robber band and executed on the scaffold. Tobaldi disclaims any feeling of guilt, but expresses a feeling of sympathy with the son of his former confederate. This much of the *vorgeschichte* is thus vaguely brought out in this scene. Antonio has not yet been introduced into the action. The narrative of this scene is for the moment brought into no connection with the events of the play. In the second scene of the third act Antonio confesses to the old servant that he is the son of Grimaldi and begs Valentino to conduct him to his master, promising to forgive him all the crimes against his father. The final clearing of the *vorgeschichte* comes in the fifth scene of the last act with Antonio's long recital of his youth. He recounts his ignorance of his parentage, the coming and going of his father, the fight at the hut in the woods, his defense of his father and finally his own necessary adoption of the latter's life as a robber. Then follows a description of his father's execution. The last element of the *vorgeschichte* is now revealed when Antonio confesses that his suit for Julia was dictated by his desire for revenge, recognizing that the father was most vulnerable through the daughter. Hebbel thus withholds the last of his antecedent facts until the end of his drama, a technique familiar enough in the novel and adopted by many of the dramatists, for example, by Sudermann in *Heimat*.

Characteristic of the naturalistic drama is also the narrative in dialogue form of scenes with strong dramatic potentialities, instead

of direct dramatic presentation. This is again a result of the concentrated form of the new drama and has to do with the exigencies imposed by the presentation of the exposition. Indeed the majority of narrative scenes deal with the *vorgeschichte*. In most of the modern dramas the *vorgeschichte*, as far as its factitive content is concerned, is of much more importance than the events which take place in the actual drama. But whatever the dramatic possibilities of the *vorgeschichte* may be, they cannot be utilized dramatically. The facts of the exposition can only be presented in narrative form because of the strict limitations of the naturalistic drama as to time, place, and continuity of action. Practically the dramatist is limited to the catastrophe for the real dramatic element of his work.

To cite Sudermann's *Heimat* again, such a narrative scene dealing with the *vorgeschichte* is Franziska's recital of her meeting with Magda at the reception. The subject offers strong possibilities for direct dramatic presentation. Another narrative scene is the one in the second act where Magda relates the story of her return home, but it brings the story into no connection with the action of the play. The pastor's story of her father's life in the eleventh scene of the second act is a similar scene. The scene between Magda and Keller in the fourteenth scene of the third act, which contributes an element of the exposition, is also narrative. The dialogue of the first scene of the fourth act narrates the action which is taking place simultaneously in the next room. Magda is closeted with her father and disclosing her past to him. This is not a part of the *vorgeschichte*, but it offers good possibilities for direct dramatic presentation. In Hauptmann's *Rose Bernd* in the scene near the end of the third act between Rose and Streckmann the most dramatic incident of the play is narrated in the dialogue. Other instances might be multiplied.

Hebbel's *Julia* is replete with narrative. As in the modern drama, this is again most apparent in those scenes which treat the *vorgeschichte*. The first conspicuous example of this is the third scene of the first act which provides for the history of the early relationships between Tobaldi and Grimaldi. Alberto's speeches are short and argumentative and their content invented solely

with a view of giving Tobaldi an opportunity to expose to the audience the necessary story. A like scene is the eighth of the first act, Julia's unnecessarily long narrative of her flight to Bertram. Practically the whole of the third act is narrative, especially the fifth scene, which is again a long expository scene. It is Antonio's story of his youth and his adoption of his father's profession. Bertram and Julia become the audience and for nearly three pages he narrates to them the story of his childhood, very rich let it be noted, in possibilities of direct dramatic presentation, but not available for that purpose because of the concentration of the action of the drama and the consequent relegation of this part of the story to the *vorgeschichte*.

To summarize. Hebbel in *Julia* has anticipated many of the innovations usually accredited to the modern drama. The attempt has been made to point out his kinship to the moderns in one point common to them both, namely a treatment of the exposition which is more characteristic of the novel or the short story and which imposes the necessity of too large a narrative element in the drama.⁹

⁹The above forms a part of a more extended investigation which is to deal with the relation of Hebbel's early tragedies to the modern German drama.

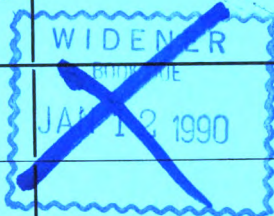


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